(b) if so, whether the Government are considering to convert above steam loco shed into the electric loco shed or workshop;

(c) if so, the time by which final decision in this regard is likely to be taken; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not utilising the present infrastructure of above steam loco shed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No Sir. Railway workshop/ Electric Loco Sheds are set up keeping in view the Railways' requirement of rolling stock and their maintenance in specific region. The existing facilities in the region are considered adequate to meet the Railways' requirement and as such there is no plan to convert steam loco shed at Bitragunta into a workshop/ electric loco shed.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Space available in the loco shed is being utilised for other operational activities.

Construction of Balurghat-Eklakhi Railway Line

2939. SHRI SUBRATA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have fixed any target date for completion of construction of Balurghat-Eklakhi railway line;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Completion of the project would depend upon the availability of resources. In view of the throwforward of about Rs. 12000 crs. for new line projects and the need to accord priority to projects required on urgent strategic/operational considerations and those projects nearing completion, it is not possible to determine the funds which can be allocated to this project over the coming years, in view of the very limited allotment of funds for new lines by the Planning Commission each year.

Expenditure Incurred on Advertisements

2940. LT. GENERAL SHRI PRAKASH MANI TRIPATHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the amount spent on advertisements during 1996-97 in newspapers for informing the public about opening ceremonies with regard to newly opened zones or like functions;

(b) whether it has lead to an increase in freight traffic and profit to the Railways; and

(c) if so, the details, thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) An amount of Rs. 3,68,37,676/- approx. has been spent by Railways on advertisements during 1996-97 for publicity of opening ceremonies through the newspapers.

(b) and (c) Publicity through the print media on inaugural functions/opening ceremonies, etc. serves the purpose of informing the public about the new facilities for realising the goal of optimum use of the facilities/ opportunities so that the benefits to the users and consequently to the Railways is accrued. The quantification of the advantages is, however, not possible.

Train Drivers on Strike

2941. KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Train Drivers of Samastipur Division of North Eastern Railway had gone on an indefinite strike recently due to which train services were paralysed;

(b) if so, the reasons for the said strike;

(c) the amount of loss suffered by the Railways due to said strike; and

(d) the efforts made by the Government to end the strike?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d) No, Sir.

However, due to resentment of some Drivers of Samastipur Division over the issue of new crew link, some inconvenience took place in running the trains. The matter was, however, sorted out immediately and normal running of trains restored.

Establishment of Coaching Complex

2942. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have proposal to establish a coaching complex in the Southern Railway; and

(b) if so, whether the long standing demand of the people of Nagarcoil in this regard is likely to be considered by establishing the same there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir. There is no proposal under consideration to set up a new coaching complex in the Southern Railway, at present.

(b) A coaching complex is already existing and functioning at Nagarcoil.

[Transiation]

International Airport at Ayodhya

2943. SHRI VINAY KATIYAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to set up an international airport at Ayodhya;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Construction of a new airport is taken up keeping in view traffic potential and economic viability. Since Ayodhya is located very near to Lucknow, such an airport, if developed, would not be economically viable.

Telephone Connections in Madhya Pradesh

2944. DR. SATYA NARAYAN JATIA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applicants for telephone connections on the waiting list as on January 31, 1997 in Madhya Pradesh, District-wise;

(b) the time by which waiting list is likely to be cleared, district-wise;

(c) the number of applicants on waiting list for Ujjain city, Tarana, Mahidpur, Khachrod, Badnagar, Nagda and ~~Alot (Ratlam~~ Distt.);

(d) the time by which the waiting lists of above cities are likely to be cleared;

(e) whether the Government propose to set up new telephone exchanges in these cities;

(f) if so, the details alongwith their capacities; and

(g) the measures taken to streamline the rural telecommunication services?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The required information is given in the enclosed Statement.

(b) The waiting list is likely to be eleared progressively by March 1998 in all the districts of Madhya Pradesh except Vidisha district which is likely to be cleared by March 1999.

(c) The information is given below :

Sl.No.	Station	Waiting List
1.	Ujjain	1340
2.	Tarana	0
3.	Mahidpur	5
4.	Khachrod	32
5.	Badnagar	224
6.	Nagda	172
7.	Alot (Ratlam Distt.)	9

(d) The waiting list is likely to be cleared progressively by March 1998.

(e) and (f) There is no proposal to set up new telephone exchanges in these cities. However, there is proposal to expand the capacity of the existing exchanges at Ujjain and Tarana during 1996-97.

(g) The following measures are being taken to streamline the rural telecommunication services:

1. Replecement of old and worn out electro-mechanical exchanges by telectronic exchanges.

2. Reduction of overhead alignments by underground cables.

Statement

District-wise Waiting List of M.P. Telecom Circle as on 31.01.1997

Sl.No.	District	Waiting List
1	2	3
1.	Balaghat	214
2.	Betul	1260
3.	Bhind	775
4.	Bhopa	9149
5.	Bilaspur	5059
6.	Chhatarpur	553
7.	Chhindwara	694